# National Biosecurity Forum

Day 1 Plenary

9 November 2020

## Introduction

This is the transcript the National Biosecurity Forum, presented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

## Transcript

[Webinar begins]

Nicholas Housego: Welcome to the 2020 National Biosecurity Programme. Before we begin the agenda for today, I would like to introduce Miss Jude Barlow, who will provide a welcome to country for us on behalf of the Ngunnawal people.

Jude Barlow: Yuma, my name is Jude Barlow and I'm a Ngunnawal woman. My family are Wallabalooa people, a family group within the Ngunnawal nation, and it's an absolute pleasure to be with you this afternoon to welcome you to the land of my ancestors. I would now like to welcome you to the land of my ancestors in the language of my ancestors. [welcome to country in Ngunnawal language], and this means, "We are gathering on Ngunnawal country. This land is my ancestors' spiritual homeland, and we are walking together as one. Welcome to Ngunnawal country."

Nicholas Housego: Thank you, Jude, for that welcome to country, and a reminder that this week is also NAIDOC Week. The National Biosecurity Forum began as a round table back in 2008, and this is our first virtual sessions that we're running. This is the first of four days of exciting sessions, where we will get to hear from a range of government, industry, community representatives on biosecurity challenges, achievements, and future directions.

Nicholas Housego: Today, we'll also be presenting round two of the 2020 Australian Biosecurity Awards, in four new categories introduced this year: the Environmental Biosecurity Education, Community, and the Dr. Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation, as well as two new winners of the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Awards. If you haven't already, we would encourage you to register for the latter sessions of the 2020 National Biosecurity Forum on the webpage of the department's website.

Nicholas Housego: If you have any questions as we go along, I would encourage you to send them through in Zoom, through the Q&A facility. Okay, to formally open this, the 2020 National Biosecurity Forum, and give the opening address, I would like to welcome Andrew Tongue, Director, Deputy Secretary, and Head of Biosecurity of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Andrew, over to yourself.

Andrew Tongue: Thanks very much, Nick, and good morning everybody, and welcome to the 2020 National Biosecurity Forum. It's unusual to be holding it virtually, but it does provide us an important opportunity to connect, and basically hear from experts around the country on biosecurity. And there's a lot to celebrate. There's also a lot to ponder, and some challenges ahead. Could I thank Jude Barlow for her welcome to country.

Andrew Tongue: Could I acknowledge traditional owners of lands across Australia, pay my respects to elders past and present, and extend my respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are participating in the forum. The forum's a really important opportunity for key stakeholders in biosecurity across the country to get together and discuss the opportunities and the challenges ahead. I come to the forum relatively new in the role, and as Chair of the National Biosecurity Committee.

Andrew Tongue: The thing that strikes me about biosecurity in Australia, the wide brown land, is that it is a shared enterprise. Biosecurity isn't just delivered by governments, federal and state. It's not just delivered by industry and it's not just delivered by the community. It's delivered by all of us, and we have to work together. And the strength of biosecurity is the collaborative relationships that have been built up over decades.

Andrew Tongue: Those collaborative relationships are being challenged, frankly, right now, and we need to continue to find ways to work together and invest in the future of biosecurity in our very precious continent. Just in terms of the National Biosecurity Committee, it is the forum where Commonwealth states and industry come together to really manage the biosecurity system. And even in my, what's this, week 12 I think of biosecurity, we've been talking about the aftermath of the bushfires, the impacts of COVID-19 in managing biosecurity, a serious outbreak of avian influenza that our colleagues in Victoria, in government and industry, worked together to manage I think incredibly well, and also coming together to learn from those experiences.

Andrew Tongue: We have to continue to work at our preparedness, and we've been talking as a group about how we evolve the biosecurity system and focus, importantly for me, on preparedness. African swine fever is in PNG and we're working very hard at the border to manage the threat of African swine fever. Since November 2018, more than 42 tonnes of pork products have been seized in the passenger stream at airports and in the mail stream. So trying to keep swine fever out is a real priority for us. Unfortunately, we've had the AI outbreak and now the Fall armyworm is here.

Andrew Tongue: And so preparedness is actually a key layer in our biosecurity system. We've had 11 incidents involving the Khapra beetle so far this year, and the Khapra beetle could cost the country up to $20 billion over 20 years. It's a serious little storage pest, and it's finding its way in. We think one of the ways is the container pathway. So for me, looking ahead at the next decade, as we try and support the National Farmers Federation objective of doubling the value of farm gate production to 100 billion over the next decade, to 2030, biosecurity plays a key role in supporting our clean, green producers, sending product around the world.

Andrew Tongue: And for us in the Commonwealth, working with our state and territory partners, and we'll hear from some of them over the coming days, and our industry partners, we'll hear from them too, we've got to stay focused on what's important. And what's important is keeping out the pests and diseases that might harm agriculture, and if they get in, responding really quickly and squeezing them out. That is our challenge. I do think, though, there's a lot to work with. The thing that really strikes me about biosecurity, in comparison with, say, other areas of public policy, is the fact that it's networked, is the fact that it's collaborative, is the fact that scientists come together with industry and public servants.

Andrew Tongue: We've got strong legal frameworks, we've got strong science, we've got a lot to work with. We just can't ever rest on our laurels. We're only as good as the last threat that we dealt with. Now, what do I think about the future of biosecurity? We've got to continue to invest in our capability. Trade paths are changing around the world, trade patterns are changing, climate variability is increasing. People are moving, and we will start to open the country up. We will see movement at some time in the future, we all hope.

Andrew Tongue: But those patterns of movement of people to different countries present new challenges. The mail pathways, parcels, a lot of us shop online, they're all evolving, contributing to evolve the threats to biosecurity in Australia, and we've got to build our capability to respond in that more complicated world. For us, in the Commonwealth, we're focused very much on innovation. So world-first trials of using 3D X-ray machines to detect organics in product at the border, which have gone very, very well. We're trialling smart glasses, we're looking at how we can build our data and analytic capability.

Andrew Tongue: So I see a future where we're going to be using a lot more tech to help us solve for biosecurity. We do need to continue building and strengthening our partnerships. Partnership doesn't mean that we all love each other. Partnership means that we respect one another, and we bring our points to the table, and we work through to get the best possible outcome for Australian biosecurity. And importantly for me, working with colleagues in state and territory industry and across the community.

Andrew Tongue: And when we talk about the Biosecurity Awards, you'll see that biosecurity is really a shared enterprise. I would like to focus on our national level of preparedness, because I think one of the ways that we will deal with challenges over the next decade is being prepared for anything, and COVID-19 has taught us that we just have to be prepared for the black swan event that happens, and we have to move. I would like to work with all our partners to raise community awareness about the importance of biosecurity. Everybody focuses, of course, on the importance biosecurity to agriculture.

Andrew Tongue: It is fundamental. But biosecurity's important to the general environment of Australia. Our unique environment in places is fragile, particularly post-bushfires, for example, and pests and diseases that we're trying to keep out hurt not just agriculture, they hurt the natural environment. And in a normal year, tourism's worth $42 billion in Australia. Not as much as agriculture, but very important. A lot of that tourism's built on our natural environment.

Andrew Tongue: Finally, international engagement, working with our near neighbours on biosecurity to help build their capability to manage their own biosecurity. I think that will be important for our future, and Australia is a good friend and a good neighbour in its region. And I think there are opportunities for us to be a good friend and a good neighbour in biosecurity. So for me, I'm really looking forward to the next four days. I think there's a lot to talk about, there's a lot to be going on with. There's lots of upside and there's some challenges. Thank you very much. Nick.

Nicholas Housego: Thank you, Andrew. Fantastic insights, particularly that message about preparedness. Be ready for anything. If you have any questions, I would encourage you to use the Zoom Q&A facility. We're happy to take questions and get them sent through. You just need to type them in. Thank you. Okay, now we're going to hand over to Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith, to pay a tribute to Dr. Kim Ritman. Gabrielle.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Thank you. Dr. Kim Ritman left a significant legacy in plant biosecurity and the promotion of science. He is remembered for his thoughtfulness and kindness to all who worked with him. Kim's distinguished career spanned many years in the Australian government, following his graduation from the Australian National University and his doctorate in forestry. Kim began his time with the Department of Agriculture in late 1995, in what was then known as the Bureau of Rural Sciences, in the Forest Sciences Team.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Kim was instrumental in the development of regional forest agreements in Australia, which were complex and highly contested. They marked a major turning point in Australian resource and environmental management, a legacy that continues to this day. After a stint with private industry between 1999 and 2002, Kim returned to the Bureau of Rural Sciences in Landscape Management Sciences, before taking up various senior management roles, including as acting general manager.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: In 2010, Kim was appointed as the Chief Scientist in ABARES and led and managed science-based policy advice for government in many areas. In 2013, Kim was instrumental in creating and launching the Department of Agriculture's inaugural science strategy, which clearly recognised the importance of scientists and building scientific capability in our work. As the department's Chief Scientist, Kim also hosted the Annual National Science Exchange Conference, and championed the Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: In 2014, Kim's role as Chief Scientist was integrated with the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer role, where he became the primary representative and advisor to the Australian government on all matters relating to Australia's plant health status and its supporting systems. In this role, Kim became the national leader of all things plant related, and led his state and territory colleagues to protect Australia from exotic plant pests and diseases that could impact upon our environment, the food we eat, and our food security.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: This advocacy role took Kim all around Australia and the world, from the wet Tropics to the Arctic Circle. Kim led the Australian government delegation to the International Plant Protection Convention, and for the International Year of Plant Health, he was our representative on the International Steering Committee. The International Secretary of the IPPC, Mr. Jingyuan Xia, recently said in recognition of Kim's contribution, "Kim had been a leading figure in global plant protection. His wisdom and vision contributed to making not only Australian plants safer from pests, but the entire IPPC community aim towards ambitious goals."

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: The Chair of the International Europe Plant Health Steering Committee, Mr. Ralf Lopian, said, "The world loses a strong advocate for the International Year of Plant Health, one of the pillars of the IPPC, and a true friend and valued member of our international plant health family." At their most recent meeting, the international plant community held a minute's silence as a mark of their deep respect for Kim.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Kim also represented Australia at the Plant Health Quadrilaterals and the G20 meeting of agricultural chief scientists, and was the Australian government representative on the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed meetings, the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative, and the National Plant Health Committee. In his role as Chair of the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests, Kim became a wise and steadying influence in facilitating work, optimising the national response to our exotic plant, pests, and disease incursions.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Kim's contribution to the National Plant Health Committee as the Australian government representative was invaluable, not only due to his constructive technical contributions, but also as a result of his kind, considerate, and inspiring interactions with his colleagues. To honour Kim's substantial legacy of strength in biosecurity, the department is presenting a new biosecurity award named the Dr. Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation, recognises innovation in biosecurity across industry, government, and the community.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Kim was also a champion of all things science, and played a key role in developing, promoting, and leading science policy to strengthen the department's scientific credibility and integrity, and to increase its scientific capacity. Consequently, a new award category named the Dr. Kim Ritman Award for Science Excellence will also be included in the 2021 Secretary Award Programme, which will be awarded to individuals or small teams who have made significant contributions to the scientific work of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith: Kim achieved a great deal in his career, but on a personal level, he lived the message of, "Be kind and get to know the whole person." This was felt by all of his colleagues in all of his interactions, where he assumed the best in people. For this, most of all, he was much respected and loved, and is greatly missed. Thank you.

Nicholas Housego: Gabrielle, thank you very much for a life that was well lived by Dr. Kim Ritman. We miss him, he was a great advocate for science and activities around the department. Okay, now we're going to move on to the Australian Biosecurity Awards, and we have the Honourable David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management, who's going to give us an introduction.

Hon David Littleproud MP: Well, welcome to this year's National Biosecurity Awards. In a year that's become a virtual one, it's important to understand that biosecurity is still important to Australian agriculture. It protects a $60 billion industry.

Hon David Littleproud MP: It's important we understand that our investment of over $873 million this year alone is at the forefront of protecting Australia's brand Australia, making sure that the product that we send around the world is seen as the best in the world. Thank you for all your hard work, your innovation. It's keeping agriculture safe, it's protecting brand Australia, and taking us into the future for agriculture and beyond.

Nicholas Housego: Okay, and to present those awards for us here in Canberra will be Andrew Tongue.

Andrew Tongue: Thanks very much, Nick, and it's a great, great pleasure to be here to announce round two of the 2020 Australian Biosecurity Award winners. The Australian Biosecurity Awards recognise those who contribute significantly to our world-leading biosecurity status, and you just heard Minister Littleproud talk about brand Australia. How we sell products to the rest of the world depends very much on our clean, green status, and clean is about biosecurity.

Andrew Tongue: For round two, we've developed four new categories to recognise the efforts of a wider range of stakeholders and the diverse aspects of our biosecurity system. I alluded to that earlier. The new categories include Environmental Biosecurity, Education, Community, and, as Gabrielle spoke about, the Dr. Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation. We'll be presenting these awards today, alongside the existing Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award. Now, the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award is jointly presented with Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia.

Andrew Tongue: We've spoken already about the Dr. Kim Ritman Award, it was created in honour of Dr. Ritman, and you've heard what a figure he was in global circles. This round of awards is a transitional event to introduce the new categories and the National Biosecurity Forum as the new host of the awards. The new categories will be included in a full suite from 2021. Today's winners include a range of dedicated Australians who've demonstrated that we all have a role to play in supporting out biosecurity system.

Andrew Tongue: And having had the pleasure of working through the awards, gosh, isn't Australia a wonderful country? It's a great pleasure now to announce the winners of round two of the Biosecurity Awards. The winner of the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award is Kia Ora Merino, for their leadership in on-farm biosecurity, sustainable land practises, and animal welfare practises.

Madison Finnigan: Congratulations on Brendan Finnigan for winning a Biosecurity Award.

Brendan Finnigan: Thanks very much, Madison. It's a great honour to win this award, and I'd like to thank the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment for making this award available, and I'd also like to thank the team at Kia Ora, and all the advisors that have given me good advice along the way. No, it's a wonderful thing to win. Thank you very much.

Madison Finnigan: Why is biosecurity important to you?

Brendan Finnigan: Biosecurity's very important to us, an example would be lice and foot lot. We haven't got these issues on the property and it saves us very large amounts of money, and good biosecurity keeps these things off the property.

Madison Finnigan: Can I take this trophy to school to show?

Brendan Finnigan: Yes, you can take the trophy to school, to show and tell, Madison, and my other grandchildren can do that, too. Everyone, have a good day. Thank you very much.

Andrew Tongue: That looked like a proud granddad there. The winner of the second Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award is KW Orchards, for exceptional on-farm biosecurity practises and sharing their knowledge with others in the industry.

Lynn Townsend: I'm Lynn Townsend from KW Orchards, previously known as Bella Heights. On behalf of the owner Keys Wheel and the rest of the management team, I would like to thank the Department of Agriculture for the honour of awarding us the Biosecurity Farm of the Year Award. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank Jeff Milne from Citrus Australia for the nomination.

Lynn Townsend: This award is important to us all here on the farm because to uphold biosecurity protocols takes a huge team effort. And because biosecurity is part of our daily operations, it is imperative that we stay abreast of industry trends, constantly refining our practises. Thanks once again.

Andrew Tongue: Congratulations, KW Orchards. The winner of the first community award is Mr. Brett Burdett, for his quick actions in discovering and reporting Khapra beetle in his new refrigerator packaging, prompting an investigation into imported white goods. And Khapra beetle, of course, is a storage pest.

Brett Burdett: Hi, my name is Brett Burdett. I want to thank Ben Rowntree of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for nominating me for the Australian Biosecurity Award. It came as some surprise to be told I'd been awarded one. I've had various biosecurity staff say, "You probably don't realise how important the find you reported has been in protecting the multi-billion dollar Australian grain industry," and indeed I wasn't.

Brett Burdett: However, my wife and I were quietly chuffed at the thought that we might've stopped a potentially catastrophic pest outbreak. I'm very pleased the department appreciate and acted on my report, and I want to thank them for acknowledging it by this award.

Andrew Tongue: So just to acknowledge Brett, his actions resulted in a search for packaged refrigerators, about 70 of them, across rural New South Wales, working with our colleagues in DPI in New South Wales. And we mobilised hundreds of staff in response to his great work in reporting something suspicious to us. And it's wonderful to see a fellow Australian taking responsibility for biosecurity. The winner of the second community award is Biosecurity Queensland's Panama TR4 project, for the successful management of a serious banana disease, Panama Disease Tropical Race 4.

Rhiannon Evans: Hi, my name's Rhiannon Evans. I'm the Programme Leader for the Panama TR4 programme, a part of Biosecurity Queensland. I'd like to extend my thanks to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for this award, and also sincere appreciation to the Australian Banana Growers' Council for their nomination.

Rhiannon Evans: The Panama TR4 Programme has taken the concept of shared responsibility and really amplified it, making sure that industry is with us in our decision making every step of the way. This collaboration and strong positive relationship has led to one of the most successful control and containment efforts for banana Fusarium wilt seen anywhere else in the world. And for this, myself and my team are incredibly proud, so thank you very much.

Andrew Tongue: Great work. The winner of the third community award is the Wellesley Islands Rangers for their exemplary efforts in protecting Northern Australia from new pests, weeds, and diseases from unregulated pathways.

Thomas Wilson: Hello, I'm Thomas Wilson, the IPA Wellesley Island Ranger Coordinator.

Shaquille Amini: My name's Shaquille Amini, I'm the Head Ranger for the Wellesley Island Rangers, along with two other rangers, Clifford Yarrak and Justin Chong. We make up a four-man team that look after and manage 22 islands in the lower Golf of Carpentaria.

Thomas Wilson: As Land Manager on ground, biosecurity is a high priority for us. We want to protect our isolated islands, country from invasive pests and disease, especially our native plants and animals like our cultural bushfruit, wattle, turtles, and seafood. So on behalf of the Wellesley Island Rangers team, thank you very much for acknowledging our work and our dedication. We are honoured and humbly accept the Australian Biosecurity Award, thank you.

Shaquille Amini: Thank you.

Andrew Tongue: As you can see, biosecurity in Australia takes many forms, and it never sleeps. Wonderful examples of on-farm and on-country practise. The winner of the Education Award is the Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre and the Tasmanian Department of Education, for educating students in biosecurity through their Revitalising School Farms Initiative.

Jeanagh Viney: I'm Jeanagh Viney, the Principal of Hagley Farm School and Visitor Centre. On behalf of the wonderful team of teachers and support staff based at our Field Study Centre, I'm thrilled to accept this Biosecurity Award for Education. Our team is constantly looking to improve experiences for the 5,000-plus visitors that we have each year. Biosecurity education and contemporary biosecurity practises are now embedded in our work. Thank you to the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment for recognising us for this award.

Andrew Harris: And I'm Andrew Harris, and I'm the Statewide Coordinator for Revitalising School Farms. Our work with Biosecurity Tasmania has produced high-quality presentations that are available to all Tasmanian schools, and a series of professional learning opportunities for teachers throughout the state. I'd like to thank Ryan Wilkinson from Biosecurity Tas for his wonderful work, and also Mandy Bowling, the Biosecurity Project Officer from TFGA, for nominating us for the award. Thanks very much.

Andrew Tongue: And congratulations to Hagley Farm School Visitor Centre. Getting kids involved in biosecurity is all about the future. And kids are naturally inquisitive, and they're a real target, I think, for all of us in the future to get teachers and schools engaged in biosecurity. The winner of the first Environmental Biosecurity Award is DHI Water and Environment and Aquatic Pest Biosecurity, the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, for developing Vessel-Check, a tool that helps mitigate the risk of introduced exotic pests through bio fouling.

Dr. Dave Abdo: My name is Dr. Dave Abdo, from DHI Water and Environment Australia. On behalf of my colleague, Dr. Justin McDonald, at the Western Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, it is an honour to receive this Environmental Biosecurity Award for Vessel-Check, from the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment. Prevention measures are considered the most cost-effective option for Australia's environmental biosecurity system. Vessel-Check is a preventative platform and has been designed as a decision support tool for both biosecurity regulatory agencies and for vessel operators.

Dr. Dave Abdo: It streamlines the process for vessels to manage their biosecurity and provides and efficient pipeline for the provision of information, from vessel operators to Australian biosecurity regulators. We are proud that this Australian innovation is not only contributing to Australia's strong biosecurity system, but is also helping to strengthen biosecurity globally.

Andrew Tongue: It's really important to remember, of course, that when we talk about Australian agriculture, we also talk about the products of the sea and the seas around us. And so our biosecurity responsibilities, Commonwealth, state, industry, the community, extend to our ocean, so that's great work. The winner of the second Environmental Biosecurity Award is Dr. Geoffrey Pegg from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, for his significant contributions to environmental biosecurity throughout his career, through managing environmental disease incursions.

Dr. Geoff Pegg: Hi, I'm Geoff Pegg. I'd like to thank the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment and those people who nominated me for this incredible award. Also like to acknowledge all the people I've worked with on myrtle rust over the last 10 years. I hope to build on these partnerships and develop new ones to help protect our environment from pests and diseases. Again, thank you very much for this award.

Andrew Tongue: The inaugural winner of the Dr. Kim Ritman Award for Science and Innovation is Dr. Brendan Rodoni, for his outstanding scientific contributions and leadership in improving Australia's capability and preparedness in managing plant biosecurity risks over the course of his 35-year career.

Dr. Brendan Rodoni: I am honoured to receive the Australian Biosecurity Award for Research and Innovation. I've been lucky over the course of my career to work with some wonderful people. To my mentors and colleagues, including those who nominated me for this award, I thank you. I've always been well supported by government and the industry to do research, to think, to test ideas, and every now and then, make a bit of a difference to biosecurity science and their systems. Currently within Agriculture Victoria located Agribio and in partnership with La Trobe University, we're doing some great research and training the next generation of biosecurity scientists.

Dr. Brendan Rodoni: I would like to thank the AVR Leadership Group and my team for their hard work, dedication, and innovation. I'd also like to thank my partner, Tracy, my kids, Daniel, and Ryan, and Tess, and my friends and family, who have been with me over the journey of my career. And finally, it's truly humbling to win the Kim Ritman Award, the inaugural Kim Ritman Award. I knew Kim, I always looked up to Kim as the Chief Plant Health Officer of Australia, and was always inspired by his passion and positivity. It's truly a great honour to receive this award, thank you.

Andrew Tongue: Congratulations, Brendan. 35 years commitment to biosecurity. On such people is our system built. Congratulations to all our biosecurity award winners, and I look forward to hearing more from our winners on Thursday's webinar. This year, we also introduced another category, the Biosecurity Commendation Certificate. The Biosecurity Commendation Certificate was designed to recognise exemplary efforts in promoting biosecurity awareness and practises. This year's biosecurity commendation certificates include Dr. Ed Morton from Rapiscan Systems, for working with our department to develop and implement revolutionary technology, to improve biosecurity screening and future-proof our biosecurity system.

Andrew Tongue: And I've seen some of Dr. Morton's work at the Mail Centre in Sydney, where we're trialling it to detect organics in the mail pathway. You can hear more about Dr. Morton's work on 3D X-rays in tomorrow's session. Miss Kate Elliot of Farrer Primary School and Ms. Kathryn Glanville of Namadgi Primary School, for their joint effort in developing Biosecurity Education and Awareness Tool, and engaging card game about national priority plant pests. Kate will be discussing STEM and biosecurity education in Wednesday's session.

Andrew Tongue: Finally, Norfolk Island apiarists Mr. Merv Buffett and Miss Clare McPherson, for their joint effort in protecting Norfolk Island's bees from pest and disease incursions, and helping integrate Norfolk Island into the National Bee Pest Surveillance Programme. The thing I've learnt in my job is the importance of pollinators. They are a national asset, along with the air that we breathe and the water that we drink. We really need those pollinators, so congratulations to Merv and Clare. Congratulations, of course, to all the certificate winners.

Andrew Tongue: On behalf of the department, I'd like to thank all our Australian Biosecurity Award winners and Biosecurity Commendation Certificate winners for their valuable contributions to Australia's biosecurity. If you want to hear more about our Biosecurity Award Winners' important work, please log in, and if you want to ask them a question, you can dial into Thursday's session. Thanks, Nick.

Nicholas Housego: I've got a few questions for you now, so if you're up for a question or two?

Andrew Tongue: Sure.

Nicholas Housego: Firstly, what are the smart glasses?

Andrew Tongue: Ah, so smart glass technology is developed by a company called Bondi Labs. Basically, what it enables people in the field to do is wear a headset with computer technology and a camera inside, so that somebody at a central location, for example here in Canberra, or Sydney, or wherever can see what the person wearing the glasses is wearing.

Andrew Tongue: So this smart glass technology potentially enables us to deploy the glasses to the field and work with third parties who might be farmers, might be people at storage facilities, warehouses, wherever, and we can see what they can see. And potentially, we'll be able to link wearers of glasses up with some of our great scientists so that we can get real-time interaction on the ground, doing biosecurity. So really, really interesting technology.

Nicholas Housego: That's Australian technology?

Andrew Tongue: It's Australian technology, fantastic.

Nicholas Housego: So pushing through with that, okay. There's another question that's popped in, could you comment on efforts being made to ensure the ongoing investment in building biosecurity capability?

Andrew Tongue: Sure, sure.

Nicholas Housego: Particularly in light of the COVID situation and where things have been going in that way. Are we under threat with our funding?

Andrew Tongue: Oh no, not at all. Not at all. Biosecurity is significantly cost recovered from industry. About two thirds of my budget is cost recovered from industry, and the government's made and continues to make significant commitment to funding biosecurity. I think our challenges I described earlier is that our biosecurity system started life in 1908. It was a very early-on piece of legislation in the Australian Parliament. World's changed a lot since 1908 and continues to change, and we need to change our biosecurity system.

Andrew Tongue: So the capabilities we're looking at for the future, of course, involved a lot of technology, a lot of data and analytics, trying to be really smart, trying to work out what we're likely to have to deal with at the border before it comes here, rather than waiting for it to be here. Then, the other aspect of capability is the human aspect, and the human aspect of capability is about great science. I keep stressing the important of the quality of our science that we bring to biosecurity, and that requires continues investment.

Andrew Tongue: And then people on the ground who know this business. Biosecurity is about people, and ensuring that all of us that are involved in biosecurity understand and respect one another's roles, and that we understand the changing world that we're working in. And we're pretty much prepared for anything. We don't know what's coming over the horizon, we do know something's coming over the horizon.

Andrew Tongue: Look at 11 CAPRA incidents so far this year. So we've got to be nimble. We've got to work hard, and I love the aphorism, "I'm a great believer in luck and find the harder I work, the more luck I have." And so it's going to be a lot of hard work by all of us for the future.

Nicholas Housego: Okay, thank you very much. One other question is around the continued investment in our capability and how this is crucial.

Andrew Tongue: Well, continued investment in all aspects of capability is crucial. So if you like, taking all the layers of biosecurity, starting internationally before goods come here. Then, as goods are on their way, or people, then once they're at the border, then subsequently even after the border, and then finally at the community layer.

Andrew Tongue: Good on farm biosecurity, and we've seen some great examples today. Great environmental biosecurity, and a preparedness to deal with an avian influenza outbreak, say, in Victoria's case, at the height of the COVID lockdown. So it's capability at multiple levels, and it's national capability, represented locally, and regionally, and at a state level.

Nicholas Housego: Okay, that's going to bring us to a wrap. I just want to say thank you for the people who have been participating, but let's get underway with this. Thanking all the questions submitted. Our team is currently compiling them and will be feeding them into later sessions. Tomorrow, we have sessions on biosecurity innovation, responding to eCommerce biosecurity risks, and a very popular topic on detector dogs, with our first session commencing at 10:30 AM in the morning. If you haven't already, I would encourage you to register for these sessions via the National Biosecurity Forum webpage, on our website.

Nicholas Housego: And we will be running a short poll at the conclusion of this session, we would love to get your feedback. So the webinar poll has been just launched, so that's underway. If I could, I'll just take you through the next three days of activities: Tuesday the 10th of November, we have a 10:30 AM start, and it's going to be Biosecurity Innovations, Research, and Development. The 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM session on that same day is Tracking eCommerce Biosecurity, or Tackling. Then there's the 1:30 to 2:30 session on the Tuesday as well, which is Detector Dogs, Innovations Across Australia.

Nicholas Housego: On Wednesday the 11th, we start at 10:00 AM Canberra time, Supporting Biosecurity Champions Across the Country. There's a 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM slot, which we'll be looking at the Community and the Industry Engagement. Then 1:30 till 2:30, Indigenous Environmental Biosecurity. Very important, particularly during NAIDOC Week. It'll be interesting to see and reflect on that one.

Nicholas Housego: Thursday the 12th of November, we have a 9:00 AM start, and that's for the Australian Biosecurity Award winners, where we'll be able to have questions raised to them about what it means to be those winners and what it is that biosecurity has pushed them to do from a professional point of view. The other one is 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM, Managing in a Crisis, Lessons Learned and Supporting the Future Directions.

Nicholas Housego: So for registering, go to awe.gov.au, and the capital N, capital B, capital F, 2020. Okay, so going through that, I'd just like to say thank you for participating in today's sessions, and I'd like to thank our presenters, Andrew and Gabrielle, for their willing contribution to today. And from here, we're going to close off. Thank you very much.

[Webinar ends]